



Montana Department of Commerce
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MONTANANS INVITED TO PLAN FOR THE FUTURE OF MONTANA'S TOURISM AND RECREATION INDUSTRY THROUGH PUBLIC MEETINGS IN NOVEMBER, EARLY DECEMBER

Helena, MT—November 6, 2006 – Montanans have an opportunity to comment on and create the vision, goals and direction for the Montana tourism and recreation industry during a series of seven public meetings scheduled throughout the state in November and early December, 2006.

Governor Schweitzer encourages all Montana citizens, business owners, tribal and community representatives, nonprofit organizations and public agencies to attend the upcoming meetings. These meetings are the first phase of a statewide strategic planning process scheduled for completion in late 2007. "Wide-spread public input is critical in creating a comprehensive plan that is functional and inclusive to guide the direction of our tourism and recreation industry in the coming years" said Governor Schweitzer.

Anthony J. Preite, the Director of the Department of Commerce, whose agency is helping coordinate the statewide planning process, explained that the public meetings are "seeking insight on the opportunities, challenges and visions stakeholders see for tourism and recreation over the next five years." These insights, said Preite, will help create "a plan to guide Montana's important tourism and recreation development in a way that is beneficial to the state's economy, businesses and communities."

The free public meetings are scheduled for:

- **Bozeman: Monday, November 13**, Wingate Inn, 2305 Catron, 11:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. (no host lunch available, please RSVP to 841-2870 or through <http://www.travelmontana.mt.gov/2008strategicplan> by Wednesday, November 8, for a lunch count)
- **Billings: Tuesday, November 14**, Hampton Inn Billings, 5110 Southgate Drive, 12:30 p.m.– 4:30 p.m.
- **Wolf Point: Wednesday, November 15**, Great Northern Development Conference Room, 233 Cascade Street, 8:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
- **Great Falls: Tuesday, November 28**, Holiday Inn, 400 10th Avenue South, 12:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- **Butte: Wednesday, November 29**, Best Western Butte Plaza Inn, 2900 Harrison Avenue, 12:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- **Missoula: Monday, December 4**, Doubletree Hotel Missoula Edgewater, 100 Madison, 10:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. (no-host lunch available, please RSVP to 841-2870 or through <http://www.travelmontana.mt.gov/2008strategicplan> by Wednesday, November 29, for a lunch count)
- **Kalispell: Tuesday, December 5**, Hampton Inn, 1140 Hwy 2 West, 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

In addition to providing comments on the future of tourism, those attending the public meetings will be involved in presentations on state and national tourism and recreation trends; Montana promotions; outdoor recreation activities; land management, access and conservation issues; cultural tourism; convention and meeting business; transportation and infrastructure; special events, attractions and other aspects of Montana's tourism and recreation industry.

Information about the Montana Tourism and Recreation Strategic Plan and its process for development is available at <http://www.travelmontana.mt.gov/2008strategicplan>.

All public presentations, meetings, comments and drafts of the plan will be posted on this website throughout the process.

****Tourism and recreation is one of Montana's basic industries. In 2005, Montana hosted over 10.1 million non-resident visitors who spent over \$2.7 billion during their visits. Almost 35,000 jobs are directly supported by nonresident travel, resulting in \$655 million in total personal income for Montana residents.****

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